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M E M O R A N D U M

CAHOKIA - Alleged Chemical Discharge
Dead Creek

REF 16

TO: Bureau of Water Pollution Control, Surveillance Section

FROM: E. W. Merz, Sanitarian, Mississippi Basin

DATES: 3/31/71, 4/8/71

INTERVIEWED: Mr. Roscoe Easteridge
Cahokia Public Works Director

Mr. Ernest Russel
Cahokia Health Officer

Mr. Mike Foresman
Monsanto Pollution Control Engineer

Mr. Joseph W. Goldenberg
Cerro Copper & Brass Co.,
Chief Engineer

Mr. Schmidt
Mobile home owner living on Dead Creek at Queeny Avenue

On March 31, 1971, the writer received a phone call from Mr. Roscoe Easteridge, Cahokia Public Works Director, who said he received a report that a chemical discharge had recently been observed in Dead Creek at the Queeny Avenue culvert. (A similar report and consequent investigation took place on March 16, 1971. This investigation revealed no evidence to indicate a chemical discharge).

Following the telephone conversation, arrangements were made for Mike Neumann and myself to meet with Mr. Easteridge to examine the area of Dead Creek where the discharge allegedly took place. The examination of the area revealed no evidence supporting the discharge of a chemical substance. At the suggestion of Mr. Easteridge contact was made with Mr. Ernest Russel, Cahokia Health Officer, who personally observed the chemical in the creek. According to Mr. Russel, he observed a yellow substance in Dead Creek flowing in a southerly direction under the Queeny Avenue culvert and continuing downstream through Cahokia. Mr. Russel continued to say he felt the chemical originated at either Cerro Copper & Brass Company or Monsanto because Dead Creek begins at one or both of these company's property. Mr. Russel also said we might be able to get additional information from a Mrs. Schmidt who first observed the discharge and lives in a mobile home on Dead Creek at Queeny Avenue. Unfortunately, Mrs. Schmidt was not home.

It was explained to Mr. Easteridge sufficient evidence was not available at this time to prove a chemical discharge to have taken place but follow up investigation would be made in an attempt to get the evidence required.

It was next decided to contact Mr. Mike Foresman, Pollution Control Engineer for Monsanto. After explaining the situation to Mr. Foresman, he said he was reasonably sure the alleged chemical discharge could not have come from either Monsanto or Cerro Brass for two reasons. First the culvert running under Queeny Avenue is blocked off and secondly the grade of the stream bed lies in a way that the water on the North side of the creek flows in a northly direction and goes to the Monsanto sewer and eventually to the Sauget sewage treatment plant. Mr. Foresman said dye tests recently performed by Monsanto people confirmed this.

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NOTE: Mr. Foresman later reported that additional dye tests performed by Monsanto personnel on April 6, 1971 revealed dye did not escape to the south side of the culvert.

During the course of the day, Mr. Joseph W. Goldenberg, Cerro Copper & Brass Co., Chief Engineer, was also interviewed. Mr. Goldenberg comments were basically the same as Mr. Foresmans. He did admit his company discharged directly to Dead Creek, but emphasized all water on the north side of the Queeny Avenue culvert, including what Cerro discharges goes through the Monsanto sewer to the Sauget Sewage Treatment Plant.

On April 8, 1971, Mike Neumann and the writer returned to the area for the purpose of determining if a chemical discharge was taking place. We observed no evidence of a discharge but were able to talk to Mr. Schmidt who lives next to Dead Creek at Queeny Avenue. Mr. Schmidt confirmed what we heard from the City Health Officer, a yellow substance is frequently observed running in a southerly direction from under the Queeny Avenue culvert. Mr. Schmidt indicated he felt very strongly that the yellow substance originated at Monsanto or Cerro. It was next explained to Mr. Schmidt that both Monsanto and Cerro officials felt the discharge could not have come from them because the Queeny Avenue culvert is blocked off and the flow on the north side of the culvert is in a northerly direction. Mr. Schmidt strongly disagreed with the statement that the culvert is blocked off. He continued to say a new culvert had been installed three or four years ago when a railroad switch for Cerro was installed. Mr. Schmidt also said he knows the culvert is open because when "they" pump in and out of Dead Creek on the north side of the culvert it causes a significant water level change on the south side of the culvert.

Mr. Schmidt was requested to notify us the next time he observes the water level change or the chemical coming from under the culvert.

When scheduling permits, Monsanto and Cerro officials will be contacted and confronted with the information received from Mr. Schmidt. Follow up investigations will continue until a definite conclusion concerning the alleged chemical discharge can be reached.

EWM/cas
4/29/71

cc: Mississippi Basin ✓

Eric W. Meyer

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